

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-40 (Cancelled)

41 (Currently Amended). A glucocorticoid-induced leucine-zipper family related (GILR) protein capable of inhibiting apoptosis and stimulating lymphocyte activity, wherein said GILR protein:

(a) is encoded by the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1; or ~~or by a nucleotide sequence capable of hybridizing with SEQ ID NO:1, under hybridization conditions of 5 x SSC, 5 x Denhardt's solution, 1% SDS, 100 µl tRNA, and 20 mM sodium pyrophosphate (pH 6.8) at 42°C and under washing conditions of 0.2 x SSC, 0.1% SDS at 65°C, wherein said GILR protein is capable of inhibiting apoptosis and stimulating lymphocyte activity~~

(b) contains no more than ten amino acid changes from the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, each of said changes being alternative conservative substitutions within one the following five groups of amino acid residues:

(1) Ala, Ser, Thr, Pro, Gly;

(2) Asp, Asn, Glu, Gln;

(3) His, Arg, Lys;

(4) Met, Leu, Ile, Val, Cys; and

(5) Phe, Tyr, Trp.

Claims 42-45 (Cancelled).

46 (Currently amended). A ~~pharmaceutical~~ composition for the inhibition of apoptosis in cells or for stimulating lymphocyte activation, comprising, as an active ingredient, the GILR protein of claim 41.

47 (Currently amended). A chemically modified GILR protein of claim 41, wherein said GILR protein of claim 41 is chemically modified by being conjugated or complexed with molecules facilitating or enhancing the transport of said GILR protein across cell membrane and wherein the chemically modified GILR protein has the same or higher biological activity as said GILR protein.

48 (Currently amended). A ~~pharmaceutical~~ composition for the inhibition of apoptosis in cells or for stimulating lymphocyte activation, comprising, as an active ingredient, the chemically modified GILR protein of claim 47.

Claims 49-52 (Cancelled).

53(New). The GILR protein of claim 41, which is encoded by the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:1.

54(New). The GILR protein of claim 41, wherein said GILR protein contains no more than ten amino acid changes from the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, each of said changes being alternative conservative substitutions within one the following five groups of amino acid residues:

- (1) Ala, Ser, Thr, Pro, Gly;
- (2) Asp, Asn, Glu, Gln;
- (3) His, Arg, Lys;
- (4) Met, Leu, Ile, Val, Cys; and
- (5) Phe, Tyr, Trp.

55(New). The GILR protein of claim 54, wherein said no more than ten amino acid changes from the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2 are present at amino acid residue positions selected from the group consisting of residue positions 22, 50, 75, 84, 112, 122, 123, 124, 125, 127, and 128 of SEQ ID NO:2.

56(New). The GILR protein of claim 54, which contains no more than five amino acid changes from the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2.

57(New). The GILR protein of claim 56, wherein said no more than five amino acid changes from the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2 are present at amino acid residue positions selected from the group consisting of residue positions 22, 50, 75, 84, 112, 122, 123, 124, 125, 127, and 128 of SEQ ID NO:2.

58(New). The GILR protein of claim 54, which contains no more than three amino acid changes from the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2.

59(New). The GILR protein of claim 58, wherein said no more than three amino acid changes from the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2 are present at amino acid residue positions selected from the group consisting of residue positions 22, 50, 75, 84, 112, 122, 123, 124, 125, 127, and 128 of SEQ ID NO:2.

60(New). The GILR protein of claim 54, which contains a single amino acid change from the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2.

61(New). The GILR protein of claim 60, wherein said single amino acid change from the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2 is present at an amino acid position selected from the group

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consisting of residue positions 22, 50, 75, 84, 112, 122, 123,
124, 125, 127, and 128 of SEQ ID NO:2.